

LOS ANGELES TIMES

F / SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1999 A17 B

At Western Maryland, Fun Is Major Focus

Education: School uses social events to help ease first-year students into college life. Officials hope to retain students and reduce costly dropout rates.

From Associated Press

WESTMINSTER, Md. — Fun isn't just tolerated at Western Maryland College. It's a freshman requirement.

Professors are allotted funds for extracurricular class activities and have taken their freshmen to movies, dinners, a rock concert and a pumpkin carving party.

Chemistry instructor Brian Wladkowski went to war with freshmen in his forensic science course — on the paintball battlefield.

"I was shot many times," he recalled. "The social events at the private, liberal arts school are aimed at easing first-year students into college life in hopes that more of them will come back as sophomores."

"It would be a shame to lose students, who would otherwise succeed and excel at a place like this, if you lose them for reasons related to their inability to make friends, to socialize or to partici-

pate in the college community," Wladkowski said.

Nationally, about 3 in 10 freshmen at private schools and one-third at public schools don't return to the same institution as sophomores, according to the American College Testing Program.

Replacing dropouts is costly, according to Ben Goe, a senior editor at the Chronicle of Higher Education in Washington.

"My impression is that colleges are putting a lot more time, effort and money into making sure students have good experiences the first year so that they come back," he said.

"They have the best interests of the students at heart, but certainly they have their own bottom line in mind."

At Western Maryland, with an undergraduate student body of 1,000, freshmen must enroll in a "first-year seminar," a four-credit course that combines traditional academic study with experiences outside the classroom.

Instructors get \$300 for extracurricular activities of their choosing. They also must sit aside classroom time to teach basic college survival skills, such as writing, public speaking and critical thinking.

Freshmen even get their own assistant, an upperclassman who helps them adjust to campus and the community.

Stacey Myers, an English major from Glenide, said her peer mentor helped her buy extra parking for her secondarily hard lot.

"It's not just a big social semester," Myers said. "It provides learning as well as getting to know the school and other students and professors."

Western Maryland's program isn't unique, although it coddles freshmen more than most.

The University of South Carolina's program aims to teach study skills, time- and stress-management, honesty and responsible sexual behavior, according to research coordinator Carrie Warwick. But instead of Western Maryland's fun activities, South Carolina interven- tors get \$50 to treat their class to a meal, and some require students to do community service.

Elective freshman seminars at Washington State University in Pullman, Wash., include "peer facilitators" to help students with personal problems, student coaches in writing and critical thinking, research literature to guide them through the stacks and computer

instructors. Western Maryland's program has shown results. The school's retention rate for first-year students jumped last year from 80% to

88%, said program coordinator Mary Beudet-Sims. "We see it as a way to get them to fit in and feel comfortable and at home here," Beudet-Sims said.

ACOUSTIC CEILINGS

REMOVAL • RESPRAY

- Wall Texturing
- Plastering
- Drywall
- All Repairs
- Water Damage Specialists

Apply smooth or other textured finishes. Apply seal coat & new acoustic spray. (All water stains & cracks eliminated)

Specializing in Furnished Homes... Also in commercial properties

FREE ESTIMATES

SPANGLER & SONS

LA/SANTA MONICA MALIBU CONEJO/SIMI VALLEY SANTA CLARITA SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

(818) 537-0428 (805) 522-0730 (805) 257-0499 (818) 349-1977

TRUNKS! TRUNKS! TRUNKS!

SAVE 20% - 50%



Home Settings FURNITURE OUTLET

1188 Sherman Way • N. Hollywood • 818/821-8221 • Mon.-Sat. 10am-7pm • Sun. 12pm-5pm

PINE & OAK SALE!

Closeouts up to 40% off!

Huge selection of oak, pine and cherry furniture!

- ✓ Home Office
- ✓ Dining
- ✓ Bedrooms
- ✓ Bookcases
- ✓ Wall units
- ✓ Cabinets
- ✓ Bedrooms
- ✓ Sofas

Check out our new MATTRESS GALLERY with low, low prices on quality bedding!

Watch for our grand opening Sat. Feb. 13th in Westlake Village... 5784 Lindero Cyn. Rd.

AMERICAN PINE FURNITURE COMPANY

HTTP://www.americanpine.com 8435 Canoga Ave., West Hills North of Resnoe 818/727-7466

Free 17" monitor upgrade with all desktop systems (15.6" viewable image size)

AST Computer is INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - IT!

SHE GETS IT



Now you can get IT at the AST Computer Expo this Saturday and Sunday. Take home the highest quality computer products at the absolute lowest prices.

Don't miss your chance to get IT this weekend.

Check IT out FREE!

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| \$1199
Pentium® II 350MHz
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64MB SDRAM • 10GB Hard Drive • 40X max. CD-ROM Drive • V90 56K Internet/Fax Modem • ATI Rage Pro™ • AGP 3D Graphics 8MB • 40Kbps Speakers • Microsoft® Works Suite 99 • with 17" Monitor (15.6" viewable image size) | \$1399
Pentium® II 400MHz
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64MB SDRAM • 10GB Hard Drive • 40X max. CD-ROM Drive • V90 56K Internet/Fax Modem • ATI Rage Pro™ • AGP 3D Graphics 8MB • 40Kbps Speakers • Microsoft® Works Suite 99 • with 17" Monitor (15.6" viewable image size) | \$1799
Pentium® II 450MHz
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 128MB SDRAM • 10GB Hard Drive • DVD Drive • V90 56K Internet/Fax Modem • ATI Rage Pro™ • AGP 3D Graphics 8MB • 40Kbps Speakers • Microsoft® Works Suite 99 • with 17" Monitor (15.6" viewable image size) |
|--|--|---|

COMPLETE COMPUTER SYSTEMS



Be part of IT

Saturday/Sunday 2/6-2/7 10am-5pm
Sherman Oaks • Radisson Valley Center Hotel (next to the ACJ)

AST COMPUTER expo

Toll Free 1-877-AST-COM1 (278-2661)

PORTABLES

FREE ONE DAY RENTAL

ORECK XL

Heavy Duty ORBITER FLOOR MACHINE

FRONTIER CONTROL

By One Carpet Clean your area seats and padding floors. Easy to use with highly rated 100% NO DANGER.

Professional Results Expires 2-27-99

ORECK XL CLEANING SYSTEM

8th. Hotel Upright

Try It Risk Free... It's Fun To Use... Everybody Loves It, You Will Too!

ORECK XL DELUXE BUSTER B PORTABLE Complete With Attachments For All Your Above Floor Cleaning Needs.

5-Year Institutional Maintenance Plan

ORECK FLOOR CARE CENTERS

CANOGA PARK 1000 Westpark Blvd. (101 & Westpark) 818-845-1151

ENCINO 1800 Westpark Blvd. (101 & Westpark) 818-845-1151

WESTLAKE/CO. 1000 Westpark Blvd. (101 & Westpark) 818-845-1151

38442 Tolland Ave. (101 & Tolland) 818-845-1151

West Hills 818-845-1151

West Hills 818-845-1151

West Hills 818-845-1151

West Hills 818-845-1151